

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; requiring every public
3 school to designate lead teachers in certain subject areas
4 to train and mentor teachers at their respective schools;
5 requiring school districts to appoint master trainers in
6 certain subject areas; requiring the Department of
7 Education to offer training and provide certain
8 information electronically; requiring the State Board of
9 Education to adopt rules relating to certain
10 qualifications for certification; establishing priorities
11 for mentoring; requiring school districts to provide
12 written statements regarding liability insurance coverage;
13 requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
14 Government Accountability to study teacher preparation
15 programs and submit a report; requiring teacher
16 preparation programs to offer certain options; amending s.
17 1001.51, F.S.; permitting district school superintendents
18 to directly dismiss administrative personnel; amending s.
19 1004.04, F.S., relating to public accountability and state
20 approval for teacher preparation programs; requiring
21 programs to incorporate instruction regarding gifted and
22 academically talented student identification and
23 placement; requiring the department to establish an
24 electronic reporting system for approved teacher
25 preparation programs; permitting persons who are eligible
26 to participate as a mentor in the Dale Hickam Excellent
27 Teaching Program to supervise or direct teacher
28 preparation students during field experience courses or

29 | internships; amending s. 1004.85, F.S.; requiring
30 | postsecondary educator preparation institutes to guarantee
31 | the quality of graduates; requiring institutes to provide
32 | additional training to educators who fail to demonstrate
33 | certain essential skills at no cost to the educator or
34 | employer; amending s. 1012.32, F.S.; permitting background
35 | screenings of individuals participating in student
36 | teaching to be transferred among districts; amending s.
37 | 1012.56, F.S.; revising acceptable means of demonstrating
38 | mastery of general knowledge for educator certification;
39 | requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
40 | Government Accountability to study teacher retention rates
41 | and submit a report; providing an effective date.

42 |
43 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
44 |

45 | Section 1. Lead teachers and master trainers.--

46 | (1) Each school district shall require every public school
47 | in that district to designate a lead teacher in the subject
48 | areas of reading, mathematics, social studies, and science. Each
49 | lead teacher shall attend periodic training provided by the
50 | district master trainers on the latest research regarding
51 | effective teaching methodologies, techniques, and skills,
52 | including use of information technology; advancements in
53 | curricula; cross-curricula training strategies; and student
54 | motivation and management. Lead teachers shall train and mentor
55 | teachers at their respective schools in their respective subject
56 | areas.

57 (2) Each school district shall appoint master trainers who
58 must be specialists in reading, mathematics, social studies, or
59 science and in techniques for using information technology to
60 teach the subject area. The master trainers must train the lead
61 teachers and provide onsite training for schools needing
62 additional assistance, particularly schools graded "D" or "F."

63 (3) The Department of Education shall offer a 3-day summer
64 academy for master trainers. Training shall include information
65 regarding the latest research on effective teaching
66 methodologies, techniques, and skills, including use of
67 information technology; advancements in curricula; cross-
68 curricula training strategies; and student motivation and
69 management.

70 (4) The Department of Education shall make electronically
71 available to all teachers the latest updated information
72 regarding their subject areas and teaching advancements.

73 Section 2. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the
74 contrary, the State Board of Education shall adopt rules that:

75 (1) Allow the military occupational specialty designation
76 for instruction to be used as verification of instructional
77 experience for purposes of teacher certification.

78 (2) Count credit granted by the American Council for
79 Education the same as college credit for purposes of teacher
80 certification.

81 (3) Allow military personnel to use proof of completion of
82 Defense Language Institute training to demonstrate subject area
83 competence in the critical shortage area of foreign language.

84 Section 3. Notwithstanding any provision of law or rule to
85 the contrary, the first priority for the use of the time
86 required of teachers who have achieved certification by the
87 National Board of Professional Teaching Standards for mentoring
88 or related services shall be to provide such services to
89 beginning teachers, teachers in need of improvement, and
90 candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs, including
91 educator preparation institutes.

92 Section 4. School district insurance coverage
93 statement.--Each school district shall provide to all covered
94 instructional personnel a written statement explaining the
95 liability insurance coverage that the district provides such
96 personnel. The statement must be concise, written in lay
97 language, and distributed to covered instructional personnel
98 separate from any other information they may otherwise receive
99 from the district. The statement must include a clear
100 explanation of the scope of the coverage and a reference to and
101 discussion of the existing laws that protect teachers and
102 principals from liability. The statement must be provided to and
103 discussed with covered personnel at all annual orientations
104 provided by the school district as well as posted on the school
105 district's website.

106 Section 5. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and
107 Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall conduct a study to
108 identify teacher preparation programs that are most effective at
109 producing new teachers who are employed in Florida public K-12
110 classrooms. The study must:

111 (1) Analyze the rates at which students complete teacher
112 preparation programs in order to examine the productivity of
113 these programs;

114 (2) Follow one or more cohorts of teacher preparation
115 program completers from universities, community colleges,
116 educator preparation institutes, and district alternative
117 certification programs to determine the proportion of graduates
118 who enter classroom teaching; and

119 (3) Follow one or more cohorts of newly employed Florida
120 K-12 classroom teachers to determine how long they remain in the
121 classroom and whether teachers who remain in the classroom are
122 more likely to be products of certain teacher preparation
123 programs.

124
125 The number of cohorts shall be determined by OPPAGA based on the
126 research needs of the project. A report shall be submitted to
127 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
128 Representatives by February 1, 2008.

129 Section 6. Each institution that offers state-approved
130 teacher preparation programs shall make options available to
131 students to pursue a teacher preparation program comprised of 3
132 years of coursework followed by a 1-year paid residency or
133 internship with opportunities for students to participate in
134 classroom experiences each year of the program and specify such
135 options in a report to the President of the Senate and the
136 Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report shall be
137 submitted annually no later than February 1 and may be used to

138 develop a performance funding model for approved teacher
 139 education programs.

140 Section 7. Subsection (7) of section 1001.51, Florida
 141 Statutes, is amended to read:

142 1001.51 Duties and responsibilities of district school
 143 superintendent.--The district school superintendent shall
 144 exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below and
 145 elsewhere in the law, provided that, in so doing, he or she
 146 shall advise and counsel with the district school board. The
 147 district school superintendent shall perform all tasks necessary
 148 to make sound recommendations, nominations, proposals, and
 149 reports required by law to be acted upon by the district school
 150 board. All such recommendations, nominations, proposals, and
 151 reports by the district school superintendent shall be either
 152 recorded in the minutes or shall be made in writing, noted in
 153 the minutes, and filed in the public records of the district
 154 school board. It shall be presumed that, in the absence of the
 155 record required in this section, the recommendations,
 156 nominations, and proposals required of the district school
 157 superintendent were not contrary to the action taken by the
 158 district school board in such matters.

159 (7) PERSONNEL.--Be responsible, as required herein, for
 160 directing the work of the personnel, subject to the requirements
 161 of chapter 1012. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to
 162 the contrary, a district school superintendent may directly
 163 dismiss administrative personnel as defined in s. 1012.01(3)(a)
 164 and (b).

165 Section 8. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3), paragraph (b)
 166 of subsection (5), and paragraph (b) of subsection (6) of
 167 section 1004.04, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

168 1004.04 Public accountability and state approval for
 169 teacher preparation programs.--

170 (3) DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS.--A system
 171 developed by the Department of Education in collaboration with
 172 postsecondary educational institutions shall assist departments
 173 and colleges of education in the restructuring of their programs
 174 in accordance with this section to meet the need for producing
 175 quality teachers now and in the future.

176 (c) State-approved teacher preparation programs must
 177 incorporate:

178 1. Appropriate English for Speakers of Other Languages
 179 instruction so that program graduates will have completed the
 180 requirements for teaching limited English proficient students in
 181 Florida public schools.

182 2. Scientifically researched, knowledge-based reading
 183 literacy and computational skills instruction so that program
 184 graduates will be able to provide the necessary academic
 185 foundations for their students at whatever grade levels they
 186 choose to teach.

187 3. Gifted and academically talented student identification
 188 and placement instruction so that program graduates will be able
 189 to identify gifted and academically talented students in the
 190 elementary grades and provide these students with accelerated
 191 learning opportunities throughout their academic careers that
 192 allow them to work at suitably challenging levels.

193 (5) CONTINUED PROGRAM APPROVAL.--Notwithstanding
194 subsection (4), failure by a public or nonpublic teacher
195 preparation program to meet the criteria for continued program
196 approval shall result in loss of program approval. The
197 Department of Education, in collaboration with the departments
198 and colleges of education, shall develop procedures for
199 continued program approval that document the continuous
200 improvement of program processes and graduates' performance.

201 (b) Additional criteria for continued program approval for
202 public institutions may be approved by the State Board of
203 Education. Such criteria must emphasize instruction in classroom
204 management and must provide for the evaluation of the teacher
205 candidates' performance in this area. The criteria shall also
206 require instruction in working with underachieving students.
207 Program evaluation procedures must include, but are not limited
208 to, program graduates' satisfaction with instruction and the
209 program's responsiveness to local school districts. Additional
210 criteria for continued program approval for nonpublic
211 institutions shall be developed in the same manner as for public
212 institutions; however, such criteria must be based upon
213 significant, objective, and quantifiable graduate performance
214 measures. Responsibility for collecting data on outcome measures
215 through survey instruments and other appropriate means shall be
216 shared by the postsecondary educational institutions and the
217 Department of Education. By January 1 of each year, the
218 Department of Education shall report this information for each
219 postsecondary educational institution that has state-approved
220 programs of teacher education to the Governor, the State Board

221 of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the President of
222 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, all
223 Florida postsecondary teacher preparation programs, and
224 interested members of the public. This report must analyze the
225 data and make recommendations for improving teacher preparation
226 programs in the state. By August 1, 2008, the Department of
227 Education shall establish an electronic reporting system by
228 which all institutions with programs approved under this section
229 shall report data required for continued approval. The system
230 must be linked to the K-20 Education Data Warehouse and provide
231 institutions with a means of reviewing and utilizing data for
232 purposes of continuous program improvement. The system must also
233 align data elements to allow for comparison of performance
234 outcomes common to programs approved under this section and
235 other types of approved teacher preparation programs in this
236 state.

237 (6) PRESERVICE FIELD EXPERIENCE.--All postsecondary
238 instructors, school district personnel and instructional
239 personnel, and school sites preparing instructional personnel
240 through preservice field experience courses and internships
241 shall meet special requirements. District school boards are
242 authorized to pay student teachers during their internships.

243 (b) All school district personnel and instructional
244 personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation students
245 during field experience courses or internships must have
246 evidence of "clinical educator" training or eligibility for
247 participation as a mentor in the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching
248 Program pursuant to s. 1012.72 and must successfully demonstrate

249 effective classroom management strategies that consistently
 250 result in improved student performance. The State Board of
 251 Education shall approve the training requirements.

252 Section 9. Subsections (4) through (7) of section 1004.85,
 253 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (5) through (8),
 254 respectively, and a new subsection (4) is added to that section
 255 to read:

256 1004.85 Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.--

257 (4) Each educator preparation institute shall guarantee
 258 the high quality of its graduates during the first 2 years
 259 immediately following graduation from the program or following
 260 initial certification, whichever occurs first. Any educator in a
 261 Florida school who fails to demonstrate the essential skills
 262 specified in s. 1004.04(5)(e) shall be provided additional
 263 training by the educator preparation institute at no expense to
 264 the educator or the employer. Such training must consist of an
 265 individualized plan agreed upon by the school district and the
 266 educator preparation institute that includes specific learning
 267 outcomes. The educator preparation institute assumes no
 268 responsibility for the educator's employment contract with the
 269 employer. Employer satisfaction shall be determined by an
 270 annually administered survey instrument approved by the
 271 Department of Education that measures, at a minimum, employer
 272 satisfaction with the ability of graduates to demonstrate the
 273 essential skills specified in s. 1004.04(5)(e).

274 Section 10. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section
 275 1012.32, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

276 1012.32 Qualifications of personnel.--

277 (2)
 278 (d) Individuals ~~Student teachers, persons~~ participating in
 279 student teaching a field experience pursuant to s. 1004.04(6) or
 280 s. 1004.85, and persons participating in a short-term experience
 281 as a teacher assistant pursuant to s. 1004.04(10) in any
 282 district school system, lab school, or charter school shall,
 283 upon engagement to provide services, undergo background
 284 screening as required under s. 1012.56. Such screening may be
 285 transferred from one school district to another school district.
 286

287 Fingerprints shall be submitted to the Department of Law
 288 Enforcement for state processing and to the Federal Bureau of
 289 Investigation for federal processing. Persons subject to this
 290 subsection found through fingerprint processing to have been
 291 convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude shall not be
 292 employed, engaged to provide services, or serve in any position
 293 requiring direct contact with students. Probationary persons
 294 subject to this subsection terminated because of their criminal
 295 record have the right to appeal such decisions. The cost of the
 296 background screening may be borne by the district school board,
 297 the charter school, the employee, the contractor, or a person
 298 subject to this subsection.

299 Section 11. Subsection (3) of section 1012.56, Florida
 300 Statutes, is amended to read:

301 1012.56 Educator certification requirements.--

302 (3) MASTERY OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.--Acceptable means of
 303 demonstrating mastery of general knowledge are:

304 (a) Achievement of passing scores on basic skills
305 examination required by state board rule for persons seeking
306 initial certification before July 1, 2009;

307 (b) Achievement of passing scores on an examination that
308 demonstrates mastery of a college-level general education
309 curriculum required by state board rule for persons seeking
310 initial certification on or after July 1, 2009 ~~the College Level~~
311 ~~Academic Skills Test earned prior to July 1, 2002;~~

312 (c) A valid professional standard teaching certificate
313 issued by another state;

314 (d) A valid certificate issued by the National Board for
315 Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator
316 credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education; or

317 (e) Documentation of two semesters of successful teaching
318 in a community college, state university, or private college or
319 university that awards an associate or higher degree and is an
320 accredited institution or an institution of higher education
321 identified by the Department of Education as having a quality
322 program.

323 Section 12. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and
324 Government Accountability shall conduct a study of teacher
325 retention rates for each school district. The study shall report
326 and analyze the teacher retention rates for each school district
327 and each school within the district. The study shall also report
328 and analyze the retention rates for new teachers. Teacher
329 retention rates shall be disaggregated to include ethnicity,
330 age, subject area, and grade level. A report shall be submitted

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331 to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
332 Representatives by March 1, 2008.

333 Section 13. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.